

Questions for September 27

- 1.) How do we know the "human good"? Is it available to man himself, or must it be revealed by God? If the former is the case, does Method contradict Bonhoeffer's assertion that "the first task of Christian ethics" is to invalidate the common human knowledge of good and evil, since this is based in the fall? (Ethics, p.17)
- 2.) In class (9/20/79) something like a proof for God's existence was offered: the existence of God is the condition for the universe to be intelligible, moral, and a field for personal relations. Expressed syllogistically, this would take the form:
If the universe is intelligible, moral, and a field for personal relations, then God exists.
The universe is intelligible, moral and a field for personal relations.
Therefore, God exists.
 - a.) What demands the granting of the minor premise? That is, isn't this argument more of a highly compelling hypothetical than a proof?
 - b.) Does this argument run in the same path as that of the Reformed apologist Cornelius Van Til who asserts that "the existence of God is the condition for intelligible human predication" (e.g. The Defense of the Faith, p.180)?
- 3.) Is the mediated immediacy you mention on pp.29 & 77 also "mediated" in the Beatific Vision? I.e. do you agree with Karl Rahner that ratio is the faculty of mystery ("The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology" T.I. IV p. 42) and that it mediates immediacy to God who remains incomprehensible mystery even in the Beatific Vision in which our knowledge is sublated by our loving surrender to mystery? (Ibid. p. 41; cf. Rahner's lecture on "Thomas Aquinas on the Incomprehensibility of God" delivered at the University of Chicago, Nov. 1974)
- 4.) The aspect of self-appropriation with which I have had the most difficulty involves constitutive meaning: I have a notional but not a (very) real apprehension thereof. For example:
 - a.) In a full act of meaning - a judgment - I settle the cognitive status of A (Method, pp. 74-75). It seems that a constitutive act of meaning sublates a full act, as full acts sublate formal acts, etc. (P.75, l.1) So far so good?
 - b.) Is the term of an act of constitutive meaning just a judgment of value - "one's attitude to A"? How then is constitutive meaning related to changes of idea or concept, which seem also to enter into the determination of constitutive meaning?(p.78)
 - c.) Is there a clear example of constitutive meaning linguistically expressed - i.e. of performative meaning? (cf. p.75, n.19)
 - d.) Meaning enters into the fabric of human living (p.81) and so human sciences differ from natural sciences. Later in Method this is amplified: the constitutive role (function) of meaning grounds the peculiarity of (the human science of) history (p.178) Is this to say that values are a part of history-writing, or is something more being said?
 - e.) What does constitutive meaning constitute? Primarily the subject, the one who means (cf. p.356, lines 9-10)? In what way, then, does a doctrine fulfill the constitutive function of meaning? Do all doctrines fulfill this function? (cf.p.298)

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- 5.) Several participants in the seminar have asked about the pedagogical principles that grow out of your work and which inform our present format. Two principles come to mind. First, there is the importance of questions raised and the authentic and responsible pursuit of reasonable answers. (Hence, these questions.) Second, there is the fact that your position is a critical realist position. In your writing you attempt to speak about "the things themselves" Thus, the reader of your work is challenged to self-appropriation.

Would you address some remarks on the difference between education in a conceptualist or idealist mode and education from the standpoint of critical realism?

QUESTIONS

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class. ...
officially ...

interim.

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Jonathan Parsons

TH 965
Method in Theology

QUESTION FOR THURSDAY, SEPT. 27:

Is the mediated immediacy you mention on pp. 29 and 77 also "mediated" in the Beatific Vision? I.e., do you agree with Karl Rahner that ratio is the faculty of mystery ("The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology," T. I., IV, p.42) and that it mediates immediacy to God who remains incomprehensible mystery even in the Beatific vision in which our knowledge is sublated by our loving surrender to mystery? (Ibid., p.41; cf. Rahner's lecture on "Thomas Aquinas on the Incomprehensibility of God" delivered at the University of Chicago, Nov., 1974.)

Dear John,

I am writing to ask if I may sit in on Father Lonergan's lectures for this class. I have 4 other classes on a tuition fellowship and could not even afford to officially audit. I will come this Thursday and you can let me know then.

Hopefully,

Annice

Annice Callahan, R.S.C.J.

Phone: 527-3860

J.G.P. Second Year

a Bonhoeffer's Ethics is in harmony with doctrine ascribed to Luther that human nature was corrupted by the fall of Adam and Eve.

Thomist teaching (Grace and Freedom in Aquinas) is that in the present order man without grace cannot long avoid mortal sin. It is a hypothetical statement. It does not contradict the affirmation that God gives everyone sufficient grace for salvation

b One grants the minor premiss without difficulty if one has arrived at self-appropriation.

Human understanding is an essential component in human knowledge; but one cannot positively understand what is unintelligible.

Moral obligation is an essential component in the mature human being. But it is a nullified obligation if the universe (apart from man) has no part in morality.

Human community is human through mature persons; and mature persons in human community have interpersonal relations; if intelligence has no intelligible object and moral obligation no objective basis, personal relations are destined to founder.

c "... run in the same path"

A condition for the possibility of human predication is a condition for human discourse

Our condition is the condition of the objectivity of intelligence, the possibility of morality, and the possibility of community.

Rahner on beatific vision

McCool, A Rahner Reader, pp. 108 ff. and cf. Index s. v.

Rahner, Journal of Religion Supplement 1978 pp S107 ff.

Eunomius (Way p. 85) held that if a man understood the meaning of ingenitus, unbegotten, then he knew God as well as God knew himself.

John Chrysostom countered with eight sermons on the incomprehensibility of God.

The eastern and western church maintained the doctrine of divine incomprehensibility

But the medieval writers, while holding God to be incomprehensible despite the beatific vision, held that there was a non-comprehensive vision

Rahner combines the praxis orientation of existentialism, the analogy of mystical experience (cloud of unknowing), to make the incomprehensibility of God the object of the beatific vision

I find this view ~~more~~ defensible and would hold something similar. I disagree with Rahner on dogmatic theory and the epistemology and metaphysics that follow from it. I would say that the incomprehensibility of God is the fact that he does love us. That anyone, let alone God, should love me, I find incomprehensible, too good to be true, etc.

My "mediated immediacy" is a different terminology from the Scholastic view that the beatific vision is immediate.

Immediate in the Scholastic sense is the denial of an intermediary ~~more~~ object between the act and the object.

Mediated immediacy does not posit an object between the act and the object but posits a reflection that understands the nature of the act and its relation to God.

QUESTION (5)

The aspect of self-appropriation with which I have had the most difficulty involves constitutive meaning: I have a notional but not a (very) real apprehension thereof? For example:

- (1) In a full act of meaning — a judgment — I settle the cognitive status of A (Method, pp. 74 - 75). It seems that a constitutive act of meaning sublates a full act, as full acts sublate ~~potential~~ formal acts, etc. (p. 75, l. 1). So far so good?
- (2) Is the term of an act of constitutive meaning just a judgment of value — "one's attitude to A"? How then is constitutive meaning related to changes of idea or concept, which seem also to enter into the determination of constitutive meaning? (p. 78)
- (3) Is there a clear example of constitutive meaning linguistically expressed — i.e., of performative meaning? (cf. p. 75, n. 19)
- (4) Meaning enters into the fabric of human living (p. 81), and so human sciences differ from natural sciences. Later in Method this is amplified: the constitutive role (function?) of meaning grounds the peculiarity of

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(the human science of) history (p. 178).
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is something more intended
being said?

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constitute? Primarily the
subject, the one who means (cf.
p. 356, lines 9-10)? In
what way, then, does a doctrine
fulfill the constitutive function
of meaning? Do all doctrines
fulfill this function? (cf. p. 298)

(I have included
it on the mimeo
JP)

(The fifth question may be anticipating
the eschaton:
may be excized according as the
instructors see fit.)

From:

J.

PARSONS

To: Fr.

B. Lonergan

Constitutive meaning (= CM)

CM emerges with commitment or refusal of commitment

It supposes experience, understanding, judgments of fact probability possibility

It adds a judgment of values regarding my own living, regarding the living of others, regarding responsibility to the community its past and its future.

In the subject \mathcal{Q} it is his ek-sistence, the norm of his relations with others, his concern for the history of his own community and others and ultimately mankind.

Profession of faith

Ordination

Public or private vows

Marriage

Inaugural of person in office or role

Hippocratic oath
and disvalues

Values/are intrinsic to the investigation and writing of history
they are constitutive of history itself

A doctrine fulfills the constitutive function of meaning in so far as people are committed to it

Insofar as people are not committed to it but should be, it constitutes the measure of the disvalue constitutive of bad living (individual or social).

All doctrines fulfill this function in so far as they are or should be committed to them.

QQ Sept 27 79 Q 1

What are the pedagogical principles that grow out of your work and inform the present format?

Pedagogical principles vary with the development of one's students. On the graduate level one has to free them from the desire to learn stuff by rote, to substitute quotations for self-discovery, authenticity, personal development up to the level of one's time.

Education from a conceptualist standpoint

Conceptualism consists in placing the occurrence of the act of understanding after conception: one understands when one has formed concepts, compares them, finds some to be compatible, some ~~are~~ probably connected, some certainly connected.

Kant's distinction between analytic propositions and synthetic a priori propositions blew a hole in the conceptualist construction but failed to convince its propagators from fourteenth-century decadent scholasticism to the present

Critical realism differs from conceptualism

(1) it places the act of understanding prior to the formation of concepts whether nominal or explanatory or statistical
it is a priori in the sense that it itself is not the mere repetition of a sensible ~~xxx~~ content but grasps an intelligible unity or relation in the data of external or internal experience

(2) beyond experience and understanding it requires also judgment before human knowing occurs

judgment is not simply a matter of observing that the predicate is de ratione subjecti, that the predicate is understood to pertain to the very meaning of the subject term
such a relationship is present in every intelligent hypothesis and all intelligent hypotheses have to be verified.

Education from an idealist standpoint

Several idealisms: Fichte Schelling Hegel; Bradley Bosanquet
we may be content with the latter

It holds that in an intelligible universe knowledge properly so called includes necessary relations ~~xx~~ of every term to every other term.

We do not attain such comprehensive knowledge. Therefore we have to be content with less than knowledge, with as much comprehension as we can and de facto do attain.

Aristotle Post An I 2; Newton; mechanics up to Quantum theory conceived science as based on necessary principles.

De facto science is advance in grasping verifiable possibilities

Education from critical realist standpoint

Nominal definition: showing how the term is used appropriately

Explanatory definition: definition resting on insight into
(a) the thing (b) its relations

Explanatory definitions are not isolated but interlocking
elements of a system: eg periodic table, evolutionary tree,
physics (very large: Einstein; intermediate, Quantum theory;
very small, exist fraction of a second,

Principles: first in any order, quoad se, quoad nos, whence
rest follow

Verification: best available system, probable in sense that more
probable than less adequate systems

Truth: wisdom

I-II 66 5 4m: science of conclusions, intelligence of principles,
wisdom judges terms of principles and validity of implications.

Without wisdom one does not reach truth

Philosophy: love of wisdom, Arist Met alpha ellatov. 9936 19ff

Eg ongoing genesis of methods

Difficulty of philosophy

We are successfully functioning animals before we learn to
form articulate sounds, pronounce words, make sentences

As successfully functioning animals we live in a habitat with
the criteria of reality of upper class animals

When we learn to speak, write, learn languages and sciences,
our fundamental meanings are a carry-over from our initial
state

We are caught in a mixture of naive and critical realism;
we are incoherent; that incoherence is the basis of Santayana's
Skepticism and Animal Faith